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TAGS: [IS](#) [KMDR](#) [MEDIA](#) [REACTION](#) [REPORT](#)
SUBJECT: ISRAEL MEDIA REACTION

SUBJECTS COVERED IN THIS REPORT:

[11.](#) Mideast

[12.](#) Arab Summit

Key stories in the media:

Ha'aretz elaborates on the expanding rift in the PA. Using harsh words, Farouk Kaddoumi, one of the founders of the Fatah movement that Abbas now heads, attacked the PA chairman in a letter to the Fatah Revolutionary Council, which met in Gaza earlier this week. He also attacked most of Abbas' policies, and especially the cessation of the armed Intifadah. Kaddoumi is part of an increasingly organized effort to undermine Abbas' authority. Ha'aretz reports that yesterday, the violence continued: A temporary police station in Tul Karm was torched, armed men marched in Jenin and Nablus, and cars belonging to candidates running for local office in Gaza were bombed. Almost three months after taking office, it has become clear that Abbas' influence over the armed men, the security services and the leaders of Fatah's institutions is virtually nonexistent. "Abu Mazen lacks the strength and stamina to stand his ground," the head of one of the Gaza security services told Ha'aretz yesterday.

Alex Fishman cited in Yediot an IDF officer's prediction that the Intifadah will renew in the fall, after the disengagement plan takes place.

Jerusalem Post said "breakthrough talks" were held yesterday between settler leaders, Public Security Minister Gidpn Ezra, and Israel Police chief Moshe Karadi in an attempt to draw ground rules with settler leaders Thursday night for the planned struggle against the pullout. The sides, which agreed to convene again on a weekly basis, discussed MK Effi Eitam's proposal to disarm settlers before the evacuation to prevent bloodshed. Ezra stressed that security forces would not be armed during the evacuation, which would be done "by hand."

Maariv reported that King Abdullah of Jordan is angry about the leak over the contents of his meeting with Jewish leaders in the U.S. to the media. As a result of the leak, a Jordanian official said that the king will not hold similar meetings in the future.

The Post reports that the Knesset is set to convene a special session next Wednesday, during the Pessah recess, to debate Thursday's controversial ruling by the High Court of Justice permitting non-Jews living in Israel legally to be converted to Judaism by Reform and Conservative religious courts overseas. The haredi [ultra-Orthodox] parties are considering ways to nullify the Court's decision. Leading media reported that Prime Minister Sharon has appointed Eival Gilady, former Head of Strategic Planning Division for the IDF, as the country's chief spokesman during the disengagement plan.

[11.](#) Mideast:

Summary:

Diplomatic correspondent Aluf Benn wrote in independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz: "What will Sharon ask for [from President Bush in his upcoming visit to

Washington]? Presumably a presidential statement acknowledging that certain settlement blocs will remain in Israeli hands."

Editor-in-Chief Lutfi Mashour wrote in Arabic-language weekly Assennara: "One little question, which might be marginal for many others, is who will protect the Palestinians from the settlers?.... We don't hear anyone, not only Israelis, mention the danger of a possible assault against the Palestinians."

Political parties correspondent Nadav Eyal wrote in popular, pluralist Maariv: "In other words, in the Prime Minister's political lungs, there is oxygen enough for just one move: surviving until the last IDF soldier moves out of the Gaza Strip. For any other purpose, his government does not exist because the coalition does not exist because the Likud as a single party no longer exists."

Block Quotes:

I. "Preparing for Elections"

Diplomatic correspondent Aluf Benn wrote in independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz (April 1): "Ten days from now, he will be standing next to Bush when the evening news comes on in Israel. The two of them will exchange ranchers' jokes and Sharon will accept Bush's encouraging words on the eve of the battles that await him at home: carrying out the disengagement plan, running against Benjamin Netanyahu for leadership of the Likud and Knesset elections.... Bush's support is a boon for Sharon, who is appealing to the public while bypassing his party.... What will Sharon ask for? Presumably a presidential statement acknowledging that certain settlement blocs will remain in Israeli hands."

II. "Who is Thinking about the Palestinians?"

Editor-in-Chief Lutfi Mashour wrote in Arabic-language weekly Assennara (March 25): "The country is going through unusual tension and fear regarding the decision to execute the disengagement plan.... Israeli security forces are joining hands and preparing ways to face the threats of the settlers.... The security preparations include defending the Prime Minister, the ministers ... and the streets.... Even Attorney General Menahem Mazuz declared that anyone who blocks the streets would be imprisoned for 20 years. One little question, which might be marginal for many others, is who will protect the Palestinians from the settlers?.... We don't hear anyone, not only Israelis, mention the danger of a possible assault against the Palestinians ... to be committed by settlers! I believe that this danger is real ... the settlers might use their frustration and their weapons ... towards individuals and groups of Palestinians. Is there any Israeli or a Palestinian official preparing for such a possibility?"

III. "Surviving Disengagement"

Political parties correspondent Nadav Eyal wrote in popular, pluralist Maariv (April 1): "Right after the disengagement, the battle will start on the negotiations for the permanent arrangement and implementing the road map. It may be assumed that Sharon and his [party] opposition will not see eye to eye on them, to say the least.... The Prime Minister can do nothing, not a thing, except surviving for the benefit of promoting the disengagement.... In other words, in the Prime Minister's political lungs, there is oxygen enough for just one move: surviving until the last IDF soldier moves out of the Gaza Strip. For any other purpose, his government does not exist because the coalition does not exist because the Likud as a single party no longer exists. The disengagement may come, and Sharon may even manage to stabilize a coalition when it is over ... but until the disengagement, the political assumption is that the government is a caretaker cabinet and the next big thing, after the Gaza pullout, will be elections."

12. Arab Summit:

Summary:

Editor-in-Chief Bassam Jaber wrote in weekly Arabic-language Panorama: "In fact, some believe that one of the reasons that there is no Palestinian state is due to the fact that there are some Arab leaders who are better off without a Palestinian state, and Qaddafi

might be one of them."

Arabic-language daily Al-Ittihad editorialized: "The statement made by Foreign Minister Silvan Shalom, which rejects the Arab Summit's final announcement, reveals the unwillingness of the Sharon-Peres government to achieve a peaceful resolution."

Block Quotes:

I. "Qaddafi's Speech"

Editor-in-Chief Bassam Jaber wrote in weekly Arabic-language Panorama (March 25): "We have listened to the improvised speech given by Libyan President Muammar Qaddafi at the 17th Arab Summit in Algeria.... What is interesting is the way that he addresses the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. On the one hand he calls for an establishment of one shared country for both Israelis and Palestinians like the 'Secular Country' called for by late Palestinian President Arafat, while on the other hand he describes the Israelis and the Palestinians as stupid.... In his view the Palestinians' stupidity lies in the fact that they didn't establish a country on the lands that were available for them back in 1948.... It's weird and amazing that a leader of an Arab country such as Libya attacks ... instead of providing a peaceful solution ... for the Israelis and the Palestinians in order to get them out of the continuing circle of violence they are engaged in.... In fact, some believe that one of the reasons that there is no Palestinian state is due to the fact that there are some Arab leaders who are better off without a Palestinian state, and Qaddafi might be one of them."

II. "Sharon's True Intentions"

Arabic-language daily Al-Ittihad editorialized (March 25): "Once again the occupation government assures its opposition to peace and to resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict contrary to justice and contradicting the legitimate international decisions regarding the Palestinians and their national rights.... While the final statement of the 17th Arab summit in Algeria called again and assured officially that a fair peace is their strategic choice and that it is a condition for full normalization with Israel.... the Israeli official response ... was a refusal for such an invitation for peace.... Furthermore, one day before the Summit, Prime Minister Sharon declared his plan to build thousands of houses in the occupied territories ... and in another declaration he said that there will be no more withdrawals until there is a final solution and that Jerusalem will always be the capital of Israel. By this he assures what we always said regarding his plan to withdrawal from Gaza, that it is meant to be a replacement for a final solution.... In addition, the statement made by Foreign Minister Silvan Shalom, which rejects the Arab Summit's final announcement reveals the unwillingness of the Sharon-Peres government to achieve a peaceful resolution."

KURTZER